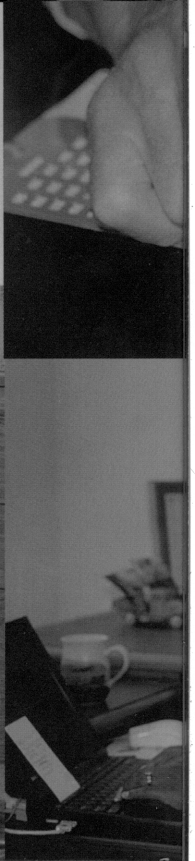
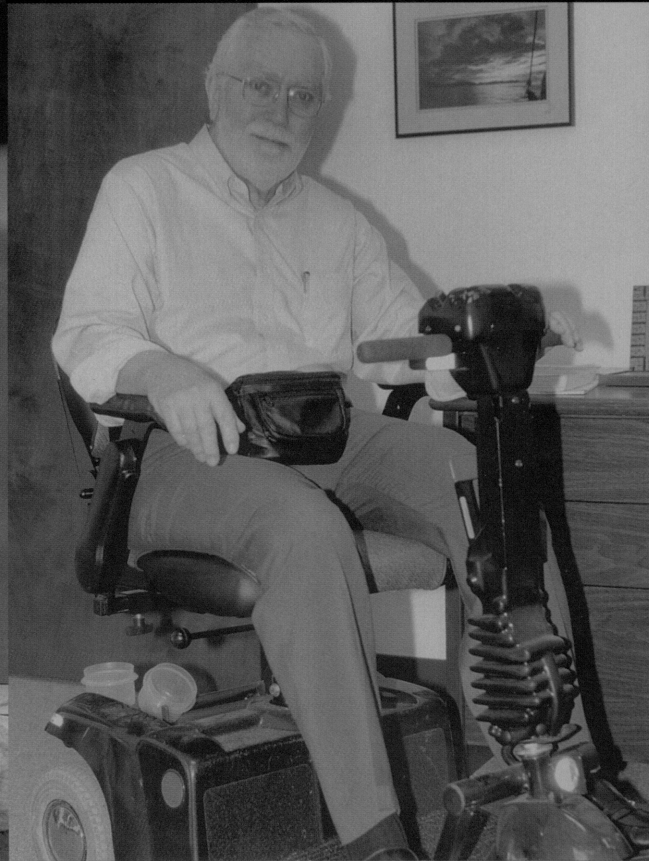
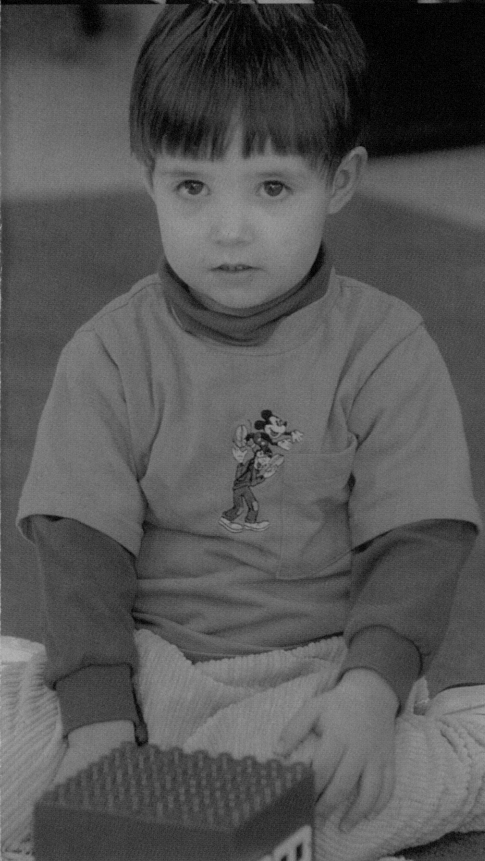




The Virginia Assistive Technology System

Your AT Solution.

Ten years of successfully helping people
live more independently in the home,
the workplace and the community.



Assistive Technology: The Solution

Mary was a supervisor at a Fortune 500 company who led a very active and demanding life. Then, one day she suddenly felt the effects of Post-Polio Syndrome, losing her ability to walk. Mary didn't know what was happening to her. Forced to give up her job, she became isolated. She knew nothing about disability services or assistive technology. One day she read about a new office being established – the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS). Mary made a phone call and her life changed. A whole new world opened up to her as a result of connecting with VATS. Mary acquired a power wheel chair, a van with a lift, a ramp for her home and an array of low-tech devices that enabled her to become more independent. Today, she is an avid ambassador of assistive technology, working to help people like herself learn all about it and train staff in what she knows really works.

Mary is just one of thousands for whom VATS has opened doors to the multiple avenues of assistive technology, which has unlocked the possibilities to greater independent living – employment, education and the community.

What, exactly, is assistive technology?

By definition, assistive technology, or AT, is any item that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities. There are literally thousands of these items available today, ranging from high technology for specialized needs to simpler devices to meet more basic needs. Here are just a few examples: communication devices such as voice output devices, large-button telephones and speech amplifiers; items like pocket organizers and medication organizers; sensory enhancers such as text magnifiers and speech synthesizers; environmental controls like special switches, and doorbells that send flashing lights; mobility devices including scooters and walkers; and self-care items like utensils, toileting assists, and lift and transfer equipment.





Virginia Assistive Technology System is Virginia's Assistive Technology Solution.



In partnership with Woodrow Wilson Center, more than 100 hands-on instructional AT in the rehabilitation through a VATS' Technology Training



Wintergreen's ski instruction is now accessible to people who are hearing impaired through the use of a personal FM assistive listening system funded by a Creative Initiative Grant.



A man confined to his nursing home room in Charlottesville uses the VATS Web site to find a scooter and the funds to purchase it. He now travels around the nursing home and out in the community.



Over 10,000 people discover accessible kitchen and bath options at a display in the Roanoke Home Show.



Neighbor's broken wheelchair is replaced immediately through intervention of a Big Stone Gap woman using information learned from an "AT Lemon Law" flier.



Center for Independent Living in Grundy receives computers for its members through VATS' computer distribution program. Participants use the computers for job searches and other communication.



"I was able to get my son the education he needs after I attended advocacy training, through VATS and the Department for Rights of Virginians with Disabilities, and learned his educational rights."
— Amherst County Mother



Danville child who is now able to travel after mother purchases the AT Loan Fund Aut



Shenandoah Valley Summer Institute gives Winchester teacher the expertise to help a child get the device she needs to fully participate in class.

Staff from rehabilitation DRS field staff receive training to incorporate assistive technology into process, rehabilitation initiative.



"The Assistive Technology Certificate Program I completed was truly the best money I have ever spent."

— Parent in Reston



"A little bit of assistance meant the difference between being able to work and not being able to work."

— Young man in Alexandria who received an AT evaluation that matched him with needed devices for work



Thanks to hands-on device demonstrations, a Fredericksburg mom selects technology that enables her son to communicate, without wasting time and money on devices that don't meet his needs.



Through the Eastern Shore AT Screening and Assessment Project, 20 adults and children are matched with the equipment they need to work, play, learn, and participate in community activities.



Wheelchair his family can through.



The General Assembly passes the Virginia AT Device Warranties Act ("AT Lemon Law"), protecting citizens from defective assistive devices.



High school class in Hampton applies Creative Initiative Award to develop a mind-controlled mouse that enables people with significant disabilities to use computers.



Twenty delegates from Beijing meet with staff from the VATS Southeast Regional Site in Norfolk to learn how to replicate the AT program in China.

In its first 10 years, VATS created a system across the state that continues to increase access to assistive technology (AT) ... information, devices, services and funding ... for Virginians of all ages.

VATS' activities are guided by the Virginia Council on Assistive Technology, a consumer-driven advisory group. It includes vendors, service providers, educators, agency representatives, and mostly, AT consumers ... people who actually apply these resourceful devices and services every day to enhance self-sufficiency.

Funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, VATS is administered by the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services. This program serves Virginians with a network of four regional offices statewide, and a central office in Richmond. Through an array of innovative initiatives, VATS has distinguished itself and the Commonwealth.

Thousands of Virginians' lives have been dramatically changed, thanks to VATS' services. Let's take a closer look.

- Information and Referral provides access to current information on assistive devices, funding options, vendors, and services. Call 800-435-8490.
- Education and Training offers targeted groups presentations, exhibits and scheduled demonstrations on assistive technology and related topics.
- Technical Assistance is available on funding resources and strategies.
- Systems Change and Advocacy helps support legislation that benefits assistive technology and consumers' rights, such as the AT "Lemon Law", and the AT Fund Loan Authority.
- Publications supply critical and practical information such as the Resource Guide to Assistive Technology Funding, the AT/IEP Handbook, journal articles, and other resources.
- Annual Conferences promote interaction, education and information exchange among AT users and providers. Consumer focused, each conference highlights the latest in assistive technology and related issues, programs and services.
- Creative Initiative Awards offer grants to organizations and individuals to demonstrate creative applications of AT devices and services. Nearly 70 grants have been awarded statewide.
- VATS Web site (www.vats.org) gives access to information on AT devices and services, offers a consumer chat room, links to other assistive technology sites, as well as a place to post devices for resale or exchange



An infrastructure for assistive technology has successfully been built across the state. Still, there is much to do. The VATS team will continue to seek solutions and serve Virginians, regardless of disability, so each has equal access to AT information, products, services and funding.

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Alternative formats are available upon request.